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**Report 02.698**

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Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee  
from Alex Benton, Appointed Committee Member

## **Proposed Dairy Industry Self-Management**

### **1. Purpose**

To seek endorsement for the Dairy Industry's initiative for proposed self-management of environmental matters.

### **2. Background**

The Dairy Industry is attempting to develop its own on-farm environment management system. This principally will evolve around the industry self-managing all aspects of each farm's operation insofar as each farmer will be encouraged to identify a variety of aspects of their operation that impacts on the environment, and to develop a means to mitigate the negative aspects of those actions. It is intended that this approach remains farmer and industry driven, and at least initially is voluntary by farmers.

Fonterra Co-operative Group has recently been providing a number of seminars throughout the country introducing this concept. It involves two documents. A "market focused" folder intended to be held and added to by each farmer through industry updates based on "best practice" as identified by the farmer or the industry in general. Selected information relating to the effluent management aspects of this folder as an example that might be of interest to this Council is attached as Attachment 1. A number of the entire folder documents will be available for Councillors to examine at the Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee meeting.

The folder covers farm management in the following areas, including effluent, water, fertilizer, waste, soils, pesticide and agricultural chemical management – all areas in which this Council has some involvement. The folder also looks at animal husbandry which we could also be described as an interested party.

As an additional development, Fonterra Co-operative wishes to develop a series of environment and animal welfare policies. An early draft of the direction this could take is attached as Attachment 2. It is with the further development and refinement of this system that I believe there are excellent advantages for this Council and the dairy industry to work together to develop a robust series of industry policies that will meet both of our needs.

As Councillors will know, we have developed a wide range of approaches to environmental management, and it would be appropriate if we could share this information with the dairy industry. It is with this aspect that Fonterra Co-operative seeks this Council's assistance.

On 24 October 2002 a seminar was held in Masterton which was attended by some Council staff. The meeting was attended by approximately 40 farmers who I believe represent a good cross-section of our local industry. The farmer feedback I believe was very positive to the approaches outlined by Fonterra Co-operative, and it was valuable in having Council staff involved. A more detailed request for assistance was made by Fonterra Co-operative of this Council later that afternoon which I am very happy to support and wish to encourage for the future.

### **3. Comment**

There are no risks to this Council being involved with this initiative, and it would make no sense to me as a dairy farmer, if the industry for a lack of tangible assistance of local government decided to "reinvent the wheel" and cover all the ground that we have developed expertise in managing, only then to decide to head in a different direction. This would lead to confusion, duplication, separate monitoring, and difficulties in liaison requirements. We as a Council are already monitoring effluent discharge consents, for example, as part of our core activities and it would be a simple exercise for Fonterra, given access to this information, to adopt compliance with Council's requirements as also being compliant with their own system. There are a whole variety of parallels in which this could develop, and some which Fonterra may develop which would assist Council with its objectives.

### **4. Recommendation**

*That the Committee's endorsement be sought for:*

- (1) The Dairy Industry's proposed self-management of their environmental and on-farm management aspects by farmers, as set out in the "Market Focused" document.*
- (2) Staff involvement in assisting with further development of this document.*
- (3) Staff to develop a submission on the Draft Environmental Classification System, attached to this report as Attachment 2.*

Report prepared by:

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Appointed Member, Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee